

NYC school staff, bus company did nothing as 3rd-grader was bullied, slashed, lawsuit alleges

By BEN CHAPMAN, STEPHEN REX BROWN and JOHN ANNESE

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Robert F. Kennedy School on E. 88th St. in Manhattan is pictured in this 2016 file photo.(Byron Smith for New York Daily News)

School bus officials and staff at an Upper East Side elementary school turned a blind eye to brutal bullying of a third-grader who was even slashed in the neck, a new lawsuit against the city charges.

The boy, who's referred to only as "QC" in court papers, has a scar on his neck from when two cruel classmates sliced him more than a year ago — and even that wasn't enough to get the school and bus company to take action, court documents allege.

The boy's mom, Sharon Pair, says in a lawsuit filed last week in Manhattan Supreme Court that the torment began in September 2017, the same year he entered the third grade at Robert F. Kennedy School on E. 88th St.

"This is a young kid who would have an expectation that the people who were there to protect him would do so," said Pair's high-powered attorney, Joe Tacopina.

The child's mother says she repeatedly complained but nothing was done.

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"They let this kid get slashed in the neck!" Tacopina said.



A new lawsuit alleges that a third-grader was slashed by bullies who were never punished.(Courtesy Joe Tacopina)

Three other children aboard a bus the kid took to and from school hit, punched and teased him, according to papers. The matron and driver on the bus operated by Consolidated Bus Transit ignored his plight, the lawsuit alleges.

The children, identified as “S” and “L and L” bullied other students as well, according to the suit. “S” also tormented the young boy at school, “physically abusing” him about five times in 2017, the suit says.

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The bullied youth complained to his teacher, but she did nothing. His mom also reported the bullying to two other school staffers, Ilene Halpern and Patricia Royall, as well as officials at Consolidated, the suit says.

“It had been continual. It had been a pattern and it had been reported,” Tacopina said. On Dec. 19, 2017 the abuse turned bloody, the lawsuit alleges. That was the day “L and L” allegedly slashed the boy’s neck with a sharp object.

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“The scar on his neck remains, and upon information and belief, is permanent,” the lawsuit reads.

Photos provided to the Daily News show a nasty slice behind the young victim’s left ear.

Even after the slashing, on Jan. 28 of last year, “S” followed the boy off the bus at his stop and punched him in the face before his mom had a chance to intervene, the lawsuit alleges.

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Pair says she kept on reporting the bullying to no effect. After a student spit on her son in February, she started taking him to school herself, the lawsuit alleges.

Pair is suing the city Education Department, the school and the bus company for negligence. She seeks unspecified damages.

A spokesman for Brooklyn-based Consolidated, which operates 166 city school bus routes, said school bus officials dispute the boy's version of events and the company denies the allegations in the complaint.

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City Education Department spokeswoman Miranda Barbot said school officials are addressing the situation.

“Our students deserve a safe ride to school, and anything less than that is unacceptable,” Barbot said. “We will review this lawsuit and take appropriate follow-up action.”

But bullying and violence are an ongoing issue in city classrooms and on school buses.



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A record 81% of city students replying to an Education Department school survey in 2017 said kids harass, bully and intimidate their peers.

And school officials were forced to overhaul protections for students victimized by bullying in a 2018 settlement of a federal lawsuit over the city's botched handling of bullying of public school kids.

Tacopina said the boy remains traumatized.

“Of course he's horrified to go to school. Horrified to be around other kids unless his parents are around. He mistrusts educators,” Tacopina said.

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Pair believes her son's bullies were never punished.

“As far as we know, the students who attacked him, punched him in the face, were in no way shape or form punished at all,” Tacopina said. “That’s part of the problem. No one was held accountable.”

